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Lawmaker Prominent in Lincoln Events

By Jean M. White
Staff Reporter

"If some little girl would write me a letter now, I'd be tempted to grow a beard," Rep. Fred Schwengel (R-Iowa) said the other day.

Schwengel, who admits to having "lost" himself to Abraham Lincoln years ago, has so far resisted any temptation to grow a beard. But he's been so immersed in Lincolnia the last year that he doesn't know what he would do if he got that letter from a little girl.

Lincoln started growing a beard after 11-year-old Grace Bedell of Westfield, N. Y., told him he would look better with one.

Although Schwengel hasn't grown a beard, he has shown his loyalty to Lincoln in another way: his daughter Dorothy, was born on Feb. 12. She will be 22 this Feb. 12, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Lincoln.

As president of the Lincoln



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REP. FRED SCHWENGEL
... immersed in Lincolnia

Group of the District and chairman of the Committee on Arrangements for the Joint

Session of Congress, the Iowa Congressman has been working for nearly a year to prepare for the Lincoln Sesquicentennial.

Will Be Toastmaster

He will be toastmaster at a banquet Feb. 11 at the Statler, and he has helped line up an all-star cast for the joint session of Congress the next day. The \$20-a-plate dinner is being cosponsored by the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission.

For the banquet, Schwengel still hopes to have President Eisenhower and former Presidents Hoover and Truman sitting together at the banquet table. Mr. Truman has indicated that he may keep a dental appointment rather than attend. He has not met with President Eisenhower since they shook hands briefly at funeral services for Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson in September, 1953.

"Having all three of them together would have tremen-

sums up so much of America."

The Joint Session on Feb. 12 will be the second called to honor Lincoln. The first came on Feb. 12, 1866, on the first observance of Lincoln's birthday after his assassination. Then George Bancroft, the eminent historian, delivered a 2½-hour address.

Sandburg to Pay Tribute

This year, when the two Houses of Congress assemble at 11 a. m., Carl Sandburg, the eminent Lincoln biographer and troubadour poet, will pay the tribute to Lincoln. Frederic March, the actor, will read the Gettysburg Address—and the Army Band will play "Dixie."

After all, Schwengel points out, "Dixie" was one of the President's favorite tunes. He

house after Lee's surrender that "we fairly captured it," and asked the band to play the sprightly strain.

From the joint session, Vice President Richard Nixon and House Speaker Sam Rayburn will go to the Great Hall of the Library of Congress to open the biggest display of important Lincolniana assembled.

Sandburg will lecture on Lincoln at 8:30 that evening in the Library's Coolidge Auditorium. The tribute will be sponsored by the Gertrude Clarke Whittall Poetry and Literary Fund.

The sesquicentennial commission has just published the first issue of a 4-page news letter, the "Intelligencer," describing Lincoln celebrations and activities across the Nation.

The sesquicentennial will also bring a new Lincoln

and new Lincoln penny, with the Lincoln Memorial replacing the present wreath on one side.

Schwengel first became interested in Lincoln and his times when he was a student at Northeast Missouri Teachers College in Kirksville. Then he went into teaching, but he didn't have "enough money to begin collecting" until he shifted to the insurance business.

Since then, he's been a collector and student of Lincoln. This year he heads the 300-member Lincoln group here—the largest in the Nation.